

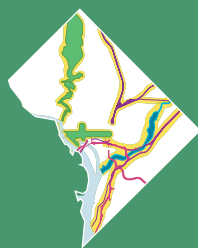


## THE THIRD CHALLENGE:

# Connecting the Whole City

Connecting the whole city is the third major challenge. While the first two challenges addressed our education, income, and employment divides, this challenge focuses on our physical divides. These divides include railroads, highways, the Anacostia River, federal lands, and even some of our parks and open spaces.

Physical Divide



We can only become more inclusive if we physically link our neighborhoods, increase mobility, and create places where people from across the city can come together. One of the best ways to do this is through large and small investments in infrastructure such as public spaces, parks, streets, and bridges. Through exceptional urban design, we can enhance our city's identity and build neighborhood and civic pride.

Bridging our divides and reshaping our city over the next century will require:

**CREATING NEW PUBLIC SPACES** where people with diverse backgrounds and interests are comfortable coming together.

**INVESTING IN TRANSPORTATION** so that every mode of travel becomes an equally convenient option.

**TRANSFORMING CORRIDORS** through urban design, infrastructure, and economic development.

**CONNECTING GREENWAYS AND WATERWAYS**, such as the Fort Circle Parks and the Anacostia Waterfront.

**BUILDING FEDERAL AND REGIONAL TIES**, so that we bridge physical barriers and address issues such as affordable housing and traffic congestion on a regional scale.

While the strategies in this chapter begin with physical connections, the ultimate goal is to strengthen the social connections among neighbors and neighborhoods.

Connecting the city is about creating the physical and social links that tie our city together

# Creating New Public Spaces

## IN OUR CITY TODAY...

**There are few places where residents from across the city come together**

We need more places in DC where residents from all parts of the city can congregate—places like Union Station, Eastern Market, and the Washington Fish Market. Regardless of age or race or whether you’re from Northwest or Southeast, these places feel comfortable.

Unfortunately, there are not enough places like these in DC today. Because our city is more divided by race, income, and ethnicity today than it was 20 years ago, finding places of common ground has become all the more important.



People from across the city enjoy Eastern Market...



and Union Station.

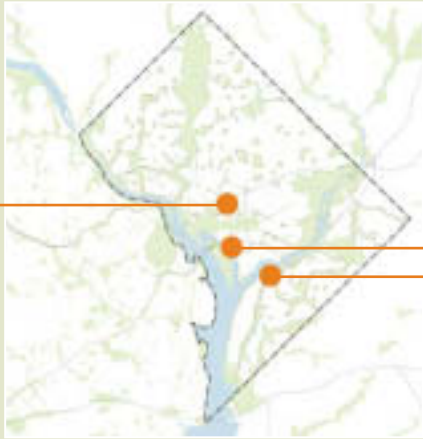
## IN OUR CITY TOMORROW...

New public gathering places will be created across our city as redevelopment opportunities emerge. These include:



**GETTING THERE  
will require  
policies that:**

## There will be more places of common ground for all DC residents



### A GATHERING PLACE AT THE FORMER CONVENTION CENTER SITE.

Part of the redevelopment of this three-block Downtown site will include a new public plaza with outdoor restaurants and shopping. Just as the Mall has become the symbolic gathering place for national events, we'll soon have a great gathering place for city events.



**A REINVIGORATED SOUTHWEST WATERFRONT.** This dramatic site will become a true urban waterfront destination for residents and visitors alike. New public spaces, shops, restaurants, and boating will transform this area into an exciting place to visit.



**A CULTURAL PARK AT POPLAR POINT.** A spectacular new cultural park will be created on the east bank of the Anacostia River, near the South Capitol Street bridge. Beautiful gardens, nature trails, a new museum, and a new amphitheatre overlooking the river and the city will draw people together from both sides of the river.



**ENCOURAGE** significant public spaces and public art to complement new and existing housing or commercial space.

**IDENTIFY** additional redevelopment sites like the old convention center that can be enhanced with public places, art and other civic activities.

**CELEBRATE** the cultural heritage of our neighborhoods through special events in public spaces—such as street fairs, concerts, and exhibitions.

**SUPPORT** the maintenance and improvement of existing public spaces that are important to DC residents.

# Investing in Transportation

## IN OUR CITY TODAY... Walking or bicycling around town can be a challenge

While DC is well suited for walking and biking, many parts of the city are not as pedestrian- or bicycle-friendly as they should be.

Some facts about walking in DC:

- Nearly 31,000 DC residents (12 percent of our city's labor force) walk to work. That's a higher percentage than New York, Chicago, or San Francisco.
- DC has more than 1,600 miles of sidewalks and is generally regarded as a "walkable" city, but we still have streets without sidewalks and a backlog of sidewalks needing repair.
- There are roughly 550 collisions between cars and pedestrians in our city each year. We need to make walking safer.



Pedestrians find their own path.



A bicyclist navigates in fast-moving traffic on New York Avenue.

And bicycling in DC:

- Although there are 1,153 miles of roads in the District, there are only eight miles of bicycle lanes, 64 miles of signed bicycle trails, and 34 miles of off-street bicycle trails. Many parts of our city have no bicycle facilities at all.
- The percentage of District residents bicycling to work has doubled since 1990, and now stands at 1.2 percent. While the use of bicycles is growing, many of our workplaces and other destinations have no facilities for storing or locking bicycles.

## IN OUR CITY TOMORROW...

Focused efforts to improve walking and bicycling mean that:

### WE WILL HAVE A WALKABLE CITY:

- Sidewalks will exist along many more streets in the city.
- New trails will connect people to the Anacostia and Potomac rivers.
- Improved crosswalks and traffic calming measures will make our streets safer for pedestrians.
- More street trees will provide shade and make walking more comfortable.

### OUR CITY WILL BE BICYCLE-FRIENDLY:

- New bicycle routes and off-road bike trails will link with existing routes, creating a bicycle network across the city.
- Distinctive and easy-to-read trail signage will be installed.
- More convenient bicycle parking and storage facilities will be found at major destinations and transit stations.
- New development will incorporate bicycle-friendly design.

## More residents will enjoy walking and bicycling



Traffic calming measures such as the signs and textured crosswalk on 8th Street SE make crossing the street safer.



Bicyclists enjoying one of DC's bike routes.



## GETTING THERE will require policies that:

**ENCOURAGE** land use and development patterns that support walking.

**IMPROVE** and extend sidewalks to form a network that links residents across the city.

**RECOMMEND** pedestrian safety measures, such as traffic calming and lighting.

**PLAN** for additional bike lanes on our roadways and additional off-road bikeways like the Metropolitan Branch Trail.

**INTEGRATE** pedestrian and bicycle planning more fully into the planning and design of our roads, transit facilities, public buildings, and parks.

**REQUIRE** new buildings to be designed with features such as bicycle lockers and bike racks, and promote similar improvements at Metro stations.

**IMPROVE** motorist and bicyclist education about traffic rules and safety.

# Investing in Transportation

## IN OUR CITY TODAY... Our public transportation system needs additional capacity

Washington has one of the best mass transit systems in the country:

One-third of the city's residents use public transit to get to work, making DC second only to New York City in transit use. More than 272,000 daily passengers ride Metrobus and almost 60 percent of Metrorail riders in the region either begin or end their rides at stations in DC.



Rush hour traffic on the Metro.

As our public transportation system is becoming more crowded,  
new challenges are emerging:

- The number of trips on the Metrorail system increased by 19 percent between 1997 and 2001 alone.
- Large areas in the far Northwest and far Southeast parts of the city are more than one mile—or a 20-minute walk—from the closest station.
- Key destinations outside the District such as Dulles Airport are not Metro accessible.
- The lack of amenities like bus shelters and comfortable waiting areas may discourage potential riders.

This data tells us that our public transit system needs to expand to provide efficient and safe alternatives to driving on our congested streets and highways. At the same time, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority faces significant budget deficits during the coming years. Innovative solutions are essential.

## IN OUR CITY TOMORROW...

DC is already working to  
introduce new and easier ways  
of getting around. Looking  
ahead, our city will enhance  
the surface transportation  
system with:

**A LIGHT RAIL NETWORK.** Four new lines will connect parts of the city not currently served by transit. This will add 33 miles of light rail, bus rapid transit, or streetcar service to neighborhoods across the city. The Anacostia Starter Line between Bolling Air Force Base and Minnesota Avenue NE is already moving forward.



What our light rail cars could look like.

## Public transportation will provide new connections and relieve congestion on our roads

**IMPROVED BUS SERVICE.** The Metro bus system will be faster, more reliable, and have increased evening and weekend service frequency. New rapid bus service lines on major boulevards will increase mobility throughout the city.

**A DOWNTOWN CIRCULATOR.** The circulator will better connect Downtown to the National Mall, the Federal government, and destinations across the central area of DC.

**WATER TAXIS.** Water taxis on the Anacostia and Potomac rivers will provide a fast, convenient new way for residents and visitors to commute to work or travel around the city.



Four new light rail lines

- LRT route
- Alternative LRT route



The Downtown Circulator and proposed water taxis

- K Street route
- North-South route
- White House-Capitol route
- Monuments route
- Water taxi
- Proposed water taxi stops

GETTING THERE  
will require  
policies that:

**DEDICATE** the rights-of-way of our major transportation corridors for efficient surface transit.

**SECURE** new funding sources for light rail construction and bridge replacement. This may mean diverting funding from other transportation improvements to light rail.

**USE** buses more creatively to meet our transportation needs.

**PROMOTE** crosstown bus services and new bus routes that connect neighborhoods to one another.

**SUPPORT** the development of new light rail lines, even if it means reducing the vehicular capacity of the streets where the lines are located.

**ENACT** pricing strategies and subsidy programs that level the playing field between autos and transit.

# Transforming Corridors

## IN OUR CITY TODAY...

### Many of our city’s magnificent boulevards have lost their splendor

Washington’s boulevards are a lasting legacy from the 1792 L’Enfant Plan and are still one of the city’s most distinctive features. They were designed to be beautiful streets lined with shops and activities. Today, however, many of our boulevards:

- Handle hundreds of thousands of cars and trucks each day.
- Have lost their retail and shopping activity and are lined with abandoned buildings or unsightly commercial strip development.
- Lack trees, landscaping, attractive public spaces, and streetscape amenities.



Commercial strip development along Rhode Island Avenue in Northeast DC.

Our boulevards are much more than simple transportation routes. Each one is part of a broader corridor that includes housing of varying densities, commercial uses, public buildings, and open spaces. These corridors give form and structure to the city—they provide the framework that joins community to community. While some corridors in our city have become the centers of civic life for surrounding neighborhoods, too many do not reflect the high quality of the areas around them.

## IN OUR CITY TOMORROW...

As the gateways to our neighborhoods, our city, and the nation’s capital, DC’s boulevards and corridors should reflect the spirit and pride of our community. Creating successful and well-defined corridors across the city requires a comprehensive approach that includes:

## Boulevards across the city will be transformed

### MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION.

Our boulevards will be designed for mass transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and not just for cars and trucks.

### HIGHER DENSITIES AND MIXED USES.

Apartments, stores, and offices will be encouraged at key locations. This will make transit more viable and will make corridors safer and more active. The historic role of corridors as neighborhood main streets will be restored.

### GREAT ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN.

More attractive streets will be created as vacant buildings are restored and quality architecture is promoted. We will beautify the public spaces along our boulevards with attractive landscaping, sidewalks, signage, and street furniture.



We need all our boulevards to look as good as East Capitol Street.

### Potential Corridors for Improvement

- |                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Military Road/ Missouri Avenue | 7. Maine Avenue/Waterfront |
| 2. South Dakota Avenue            | 8. H Street/Benning Road   |
| 3. Georgia Avenue                 | 9. Pennsylvania Avenue SE  |
| 4. Massachusetts Avenue           | 10. East Capitol Street    |
| 5. Rhode Island Avenue            | 11. M Street SE            |
| 6. New York Avenue                | 12. South Capitol Street   |

### GETTING THERE will require policies that:

**TARGET** planning and public investment toward the specific corridors with the greatest potential to connect our neighborhoods.

**ADOPT** stronger streetscape and design standards for boulevards. In some cases, this could mean reducing the number of traffic lanes and adding wider sidewalks and bike lanes.

**DISCOURAGE** or prohibit certain uses, like “drive-through” businesses or stores with large surface parking lots, along key boulevards.

**ESTABLISH** zoning incentives along corridors that promote mixed use development, such as ground floor stores with housing above. This could require increasing the allowable densities in some areas.

**ENFORCE** building height, setback, and design regulations to shape the appearance and character of our corridors.

**UPGRADE** the cross-town boulevards that link the east and west sides of the city.

# Connecting Greenways and Waterways

## IN OUR CITY TODAY... Washington’s parks do not form a connected open space system

Many cities have gone to great lengths to create connected networks of parks and open spaces. In DC, we already have the ingredients to create such a network through...



Fort Reno in Northwest DC was the largest Civil War defense post in the city.

- Several efforts have been made over the past 100 years to turn the Fort Circle Parks into a greenway system. Despite much progress, this system has never been completed.
- The legacy of the Fort Circle remains unknown to most visitors to DC and even to many residents. Many of the green spaces that connect the parks are overgrown with vegetation, and there are few interpretive signs or facilities for visitors.

### Our Anacostia Waterfront:

- There are more than 900 acres of land along the Anacostia waterfront and Washington Channel, 90 percent of which is publicly owned.
- Much of this land is isolated from nearby neighborhoods or is cut off from public access by highways and other barriers.
- Getting to the river—or walking or cycling along its banks—is difficult or impossible in many places.
- There are 20 separate parks and open spaces along the river, most disconnected from one another.

### Our Fort Circle Parks:

- President Lincoln ordered that a network of forts be built to defend our city during the Civil War. By 1865, 68 forts and 20 miles of rifle trenches formed a ring around Washington.
- After the war, the forts were dismantled. Most of the land was transferred to the National Park Service and the fort sites became neighborhood parks and cultural sites.

## IN OUR CITY TOMORROW...

Strategic moves will transform the Fort Circle Parks and the Anacostia Waterfront into remarkable greenways. This will be achieved through:

**A FORT CIRCLE TRAIL.** Residents and visitors will be able to walk along a 23-mile trail that links fort to fort—and neighborhood to neighborhood. Along the trail, existing and new parks will provide quality green spaces.



Trails like this one in Fort Dupont Park could tie the Fort Circle Parks together.

## The Fort Circle Parks and the Anacostia waterfront will become “green necklaces” of open space

**RENOVATED PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.** Ballfields, basketball courts, picnic areas and other facilities will be renovated at Fort Dupont and other parks along the Fort Circle.

**NEW CULTURAL TOURISM FACILITIES.** A new National Park Service visitor facility at Fort Stevens, along with new signs and markers, will tie the forts together. These improvements will help more DC residents and visitors learn about an important chapter in our city’s history.

**AN EXPANDED ANACOSTIA PARK AND 20-MILE RIVERWALK.** A continuous trail will run along both sides of the Anacostia River, with connections to the Fort Circle Trail and existing trails along the Potomac. Along the Anacostia River, over 200 acres of parks and recreational facilities will be enhanced and over 100 acres of new parks will be created.



A new waterfront park at Reservation 13 in the Hill East neighborhood will become part of the Anacostia greenway.

**Fort Circle Parks**  
Historic fort site  
Fort Circle greenway

GETTING THERE  
will require  
policies that:

**PROMOTE** acquisition of key sites, so that the 100-year vision of linking the Fort Circle Parks in a complete ring around the city can be realized.

**PROTECT** the archaeological resources of the Fort Circle earthworks, as well as the sight lines and vistas from the parks.

**ADVOCATE** a redesign of the Fort Circle Parks so they are more accessible and usable, in some cases adding new pedestrian and bicycle trails, parking areas, transit stops, and commemorative features.

**ADDRESS** the issue of roads and traffic circulation across our parks.

**SUPPORT** partnerships between the City and the National Park Service to improve management, safety, access, and maintenance along the Fort Circle and the Anacostia Waterfront.

**ADVANCE** the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative by unifying riverfront parks and improving connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

# Building Federal and Regional Ties

## IN OUR CITY TODAY...

### Federal and local interests are sometimes at odds

The federal presence gives Washington its memorable character and timeless beauty. It enriches the local economy and shapes our way of life—it is what distinguishes us from all other American cities.

Today:

- The city's most familiar images are the federal buildings, museums, and memorials of the monumental core.
- Forty percent of Washington's land is federally owned or controlled.
- There are 193,000 federal workers in the District—almost a third of the workforce. Federal procurement spending in the District totals \$7.5 billion.
- Over 85 percent of the District's parkland and almost all of the waterfront is federally owned.
- Residents have access to world-renowned cultural institutions.

At the same time, the unique needs of a national capital can make it tougher to be open and inclusive. For example:

- Security-driven street closures and parking restrictions affect traffic flow.
- Federal interests and processes can frustrate the efforts of local residents to shape the city.
- Responses to increasing security needs can diminish the beauty of public spaces and prevent pedestrian-friendly streetscapes. Security also means that public access to many federal sites is restricted, limiting access to open space and creating barriers between neighborhoods.
- Some federal facility designs fail to fully contribute to the vitality of the surrounding environment because of use limitations, a lack of ground floor activity, or building setback requirements.



The closure of Pennsylvania Avenue near the White House has affected traffic patterns throughout Central Washington.

## IN OUR CITY TOMORROW...

The federal city and the local city will be unified as:

**FEDERAL LAND BECOMES MORE ACCESSIBLE.** Development on underutilized federal lands will promote public access, link neighborhoods together, improve mobility, enhance our tax base, and help meet the space needs of the federal government.



## Federal and local interests will both be satisfied

**SECURITY AND AESTHETICS ARE BOTH ACHIEVED.** The security of our national monuments and federal buildings will be improved without sacrificing aesthetic values.



A joint federal and District planning and development program for the Southeast Federal Center will transform this area during the coming years.

**FEDERAL CHOICES CONSIDER LOCAL OBJECTIVES.** Decisions about federal facility locations, design, and operations incorporate District goals for improving economic and community conditions.

**MORE LOCAL EVENTS AND USES ARE PROGRAMMED ON FEDERAL LANDS.** Federal parks and public spaces host events that can be enjoyed by the local community as well as visitors.

A redesigned Pennsylvania Avenue, as envisioned by the National Capital Planning Commission, shows a street environment that is welcoming and dignified while maintaining security and accessibility.



### GETTING THERE will require policies that:

**PROMOTE** joint federal and District planning efforts, and look for future opportunities to capitalize on shared federal and local interests, such as the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative.

**SUPPORT** creative design solutions to improve federal public spaces and overcome physical barriers separating neighborhoods.

**COMPLEMENT** federal policies on the location and impacts of new government facilities, foreign missions, and monuments.

**ADDRESS** the traffic, mobility, and aesthetic issues associated with security-related street closures, parking restrictions, and building renovations.

**IMPROVE** transportation between the monumental core, the waterfront, Downtown, and our neighborhoods.

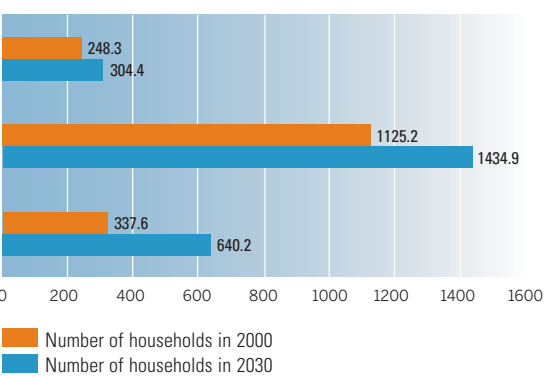
# Building Federal and Regional Ties

## IN OUR CITY TODAY...

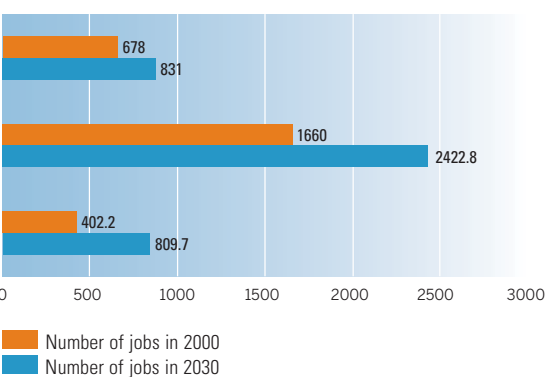
### Our region is growing rapidly, creating transportation and environmental impacts

Today, DC continues to be the hub of a growing and prosperous region. Intensive household and job growth in the outlying areas, however, is creating transportation and environmental challenges that affect us all.

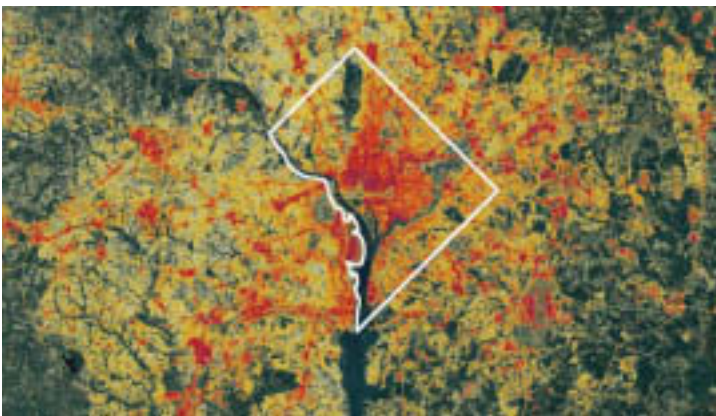
PROJECTED HOUSEHOLD GROWTH (THOUSANDS)



PROJECTED JOB GROWTH (THOUSANDS)



- Every three to four years in our region, an area the size of the District of Columbia is converted from open space to development. Farms and woods located 40 to 50 miles from DC are being replaced by housing.



This satellite photo reveals how development has spread across the region.

- Fifty years ago, DC had 46 percent of the region's population. Today, we have only 12 percent of the region's population. Projections for the year 2030 indicate that our share will continue to decline.
- Fifty years ago, DC had 82 percent of the region's jobs. Today, we have only 24 percent of the region's jobs. Projections for the year 2030 indicate our share will be just 20 percent.
- While the region's total population is expected to grow by 25 percent in the next 25 years, traffic congestion on the region's streets and highways is projected to increase by 70 percent.
- Many jurisdictions in the Washington region are not building enough affordable housing. As a result, poverty is becoming more concentrated, with nearly half of the region's poor now living within the District.

## IN OUR CITY TOMORROW...

In some ways, strengthening ties to the region is the toughest of all our challenges. Too often, the regional debate—between two states and the District—is about competition rather than cooperation. But there are many ways we can change the status quo. Thinking regionally can lead us to a future where:



Council of Governments (COG) Board members meet to discuss regional transportation projects.

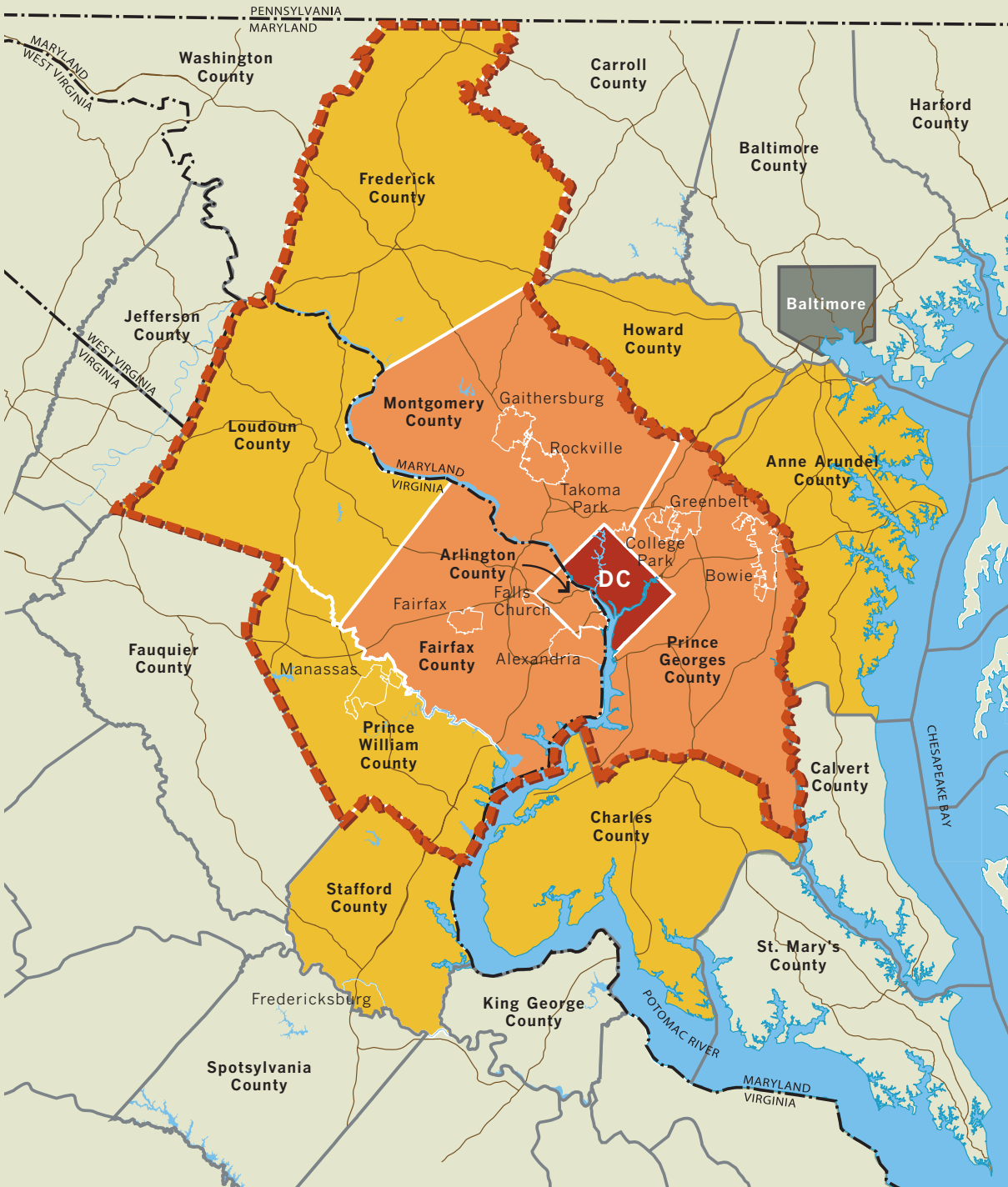
## Jurisdictions will work together to address regional issues while keeping DC the strong center

**"SMART GROWTH" WILL BECOME REALITY.** Cities and counties across the region will locate higher density development around Metro stations. New transit systems will be developed, and new walkable neighborhoods will be built in DC and its older suburbs.

**OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WILL BE RESTORED.** More compact growth patterns will improve our air and water quality. The loss of open space will be curbed as development occurs in the places best equipped to handle it, including the District of Columbia.

**NO COMMUNITY WILL BE LEFT BEHIND.** Jurisdictions will work together to share resources more fairly and provide a range of affordable housing options across the region.

**DC WILL REMAIN THE HUB.** We will retain our historic role as the region's major employment and cultural center, and the home of its most cosmopolitan and diverse neighborhoods.



## GETTING THERE will require policies that:

**ADVOCATE** for stronger zoning, and comprehensive planning in the outer suburbs, so that rural areas can be preserved before they are consumed by development.

**OPPOSE** projects and plans that promote suburban sprawl, including highway and infrastructure projects or federal relocation decisions that induce growth far from the city.

**ACCOMMODATE** development here in DC, around our transit stations, and in other places where infrastructure is already in place.

**LINK** our city's economic development programs to the regional economy, helping DC residents find and access jobs throughout the region while retaining federal jobs here in DC.

**CONTINUE** to advocate for voting rights for the District of Columbia, to ensure that the city has an equal place at the table with Maryland and Virginia in discussions on the future of our region.

**PURSUE** legislative changes that equalize the tax burden in the region and correct the fiscal imbalance that DC faces today.